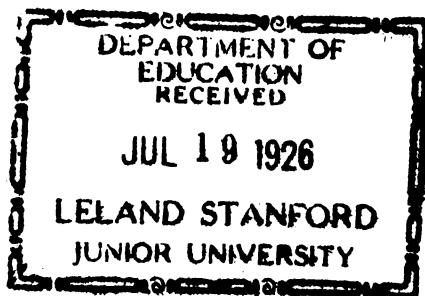


COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC BY PRACTICE

BY
WILLIAM WILLIAMS, B.A.
AND

J. C. TRESSLER, M.A.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL
NEW YORK CITY



D. C. HEATH & CO., PUBLISHERS
BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO

4. Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot

O'er the grave where our hero we buried. — *Wolfe*.

5. Who is the man that, in addition to the disgraces and mischiefs of the war, has dared to authorize and associate to our arms the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the savage? — to call into civilized alliance the wild and inhuman inhabitant of the woods? — to delegate to the merciless Indian the defense of disputed rights, and to wage the horrors of this barbarous war against our brethren? My lords, these enormities cry aloud for redress and punishment. — *Chatham*.

6. It is a distressing and oppressive duty, gentlemen of the Congress, which I have performed in thus addressing you. There are, it may be, many months of fiery trial and sacrifice ahead of us. It is a fearful thing to lead this great, peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts. — *Wilson*.

PHRASING

Meaning. A phrase presents a single or simple idea in a group of words so closely united in oral expression that they seem almost one long word. The phrase is important in reading because it is the unit of expression. We read and recite, not by syllables, words, or sentences, but by groups of related words called phrases. Much reading aloud is necessary to establish the habit of looking quickly ahead to get the meaning.

Mistakes in phrasing. Phrasing depends upon the thought, not upon the part of speech, punctuation, or breath supply. A punctuation mark may fall within a phrase; the end of a phrase is often not marked by punctuation. Common mistakes are pausing according to punctuation instead of meaning and pausing to get breath rather than to group the ideas. Another fault is the failure to think out and express with the voice the relationship

between phrases. In such reading the individual units are not tied together in a larger whole.

Examples. 1. The past | rises before me | like a dream. — *Ingersoll.*

2. Thank God | every morning when you get up | that you have something to do that day | which must be done | whether you like it or not. | Being forced to work | and forced to do your best | will breed in you | a hundred virtues | which the idle never know. — *Kingsley.*

Sometimes two different phrasings are equally good. In the above selection, for example, *will breed in you a hundred virtues* may be read as one phrase. Use shorter phrases in reading subject matter hard to understand and in emphasizing details. Use longer phrases for familiar subject matter and for giving a general impression.

EMPHASIS

Emphasis is any means by which a speaker calls particular attention to important words or ideas.

Selecting the emphatic word. There are four principles for selecting the emphatic word. Each of the principles covers the subject, but sometimes one of them is more easily applied than the others.

1. *The word which represents the new idea is emphatic.*
The newcomer is introduced.

I have proved that compulsory arbitration is sound in principle and shall next show that it is *practicable*.

2. *Emphasize words necessary for the sense.* If we had a shorthand language, we could omit most prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, and interjections, many adjectives and adverbs, and some nouns and verbs without destroying or distorting the main ideas to be expressed. In the question, "What profession do you intend to enter after you have completed your schooling?" *profession* — *schooling completed?* carries the idea of the sentence. Hence the three words are emphatic.

3. *Emphasize words which express or suggest a contrast.*

Read aloud six times the sentence: *Did Father ride to the office today?* In the readings emphasize in turn *did*, *Father*, *ride*, *to*, *office*, and *today*. What is the contrast implied when the emphasis is placed on *did?* on *Father?* on *ride?* on *to?* on *office?* on *today?*

4. *Emphasize as in conversation.* When we talk, we emphasize correctly without thinking about the placing of the emphasis. Hence know the passage; read as if you were talking; and the emphasis will be correct.

RULES AND CAUTIONS

1. *Do not emphasize a word repeated unless it is repeated for the sake of emphasis.*

2. *Do not emphasize a modifier at the expense of the word modified.* It is sometimes said that we should emphasize nouns and verbs, never adjectives and adverbs. This is an overstatement because emphasis depends upon the thought, not upon the part of speech, and occasionally an adverb expresses or implies a contrast.

3. *Do not speak as if all words were "created free and equal."* If a speaker tries to emphasize every word, he merely wears himself out and makes nothing emphatic. Subordinate articles, prepositions, conjunctions, and other unimportant words.

4. *In poetry avoid singsong — emphasis according to rhythm regardless of the sense.* Select the emphatic word by the four principles of emphasis; underscore these words; make them emphatic. This is a sure cure for singsong.

5. *Do not end the sentence feebly.* If the sentence is well constructed, it has an important idea at the end.

6. *Speak proper names with mechanical clearness.* If the audience do not hear the name of a man mentioned, they will have little interest in what is said about him.

Making a word emphatic. The unusual attracts attention. The six methods of making a word emphatic are six changes from the manner in which the unimportant words of the sentence are uttered. Two or three methods may be combined to give added emphasis to a word.

1. *Inflection* — a downward stroke of the voice on the emphatic word.

They are Yankees, they are Johnnies,
They're from North and South no more.

(*Yankees, Johnnies, North, and South* are emphasized by the falling inflection.)

2. A *pause before or after* the word to give weight to the word.

(*No more* in the passage quoted is best emphasized by a pause before *no*.)

3. *Time* on the word.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. (Give extra time to *new nation, conceived, liberty, dedicated, all, equal*.)

4. Change of *pitch*.

5. Change of *volume*.

6. Change of *quality*.

Young speakers often think loudness the only method of emphasis. On the contrary inflection is the most common method; and pause, the most effective method.

PRACTICE

Indicate the phrasing, underscore the emphatic words, and read aloud:

The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.

His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
 But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
 It is enthronéd in the hearts of kings;
 It is an attribute of God Himself;
 And earthly power doth then show likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
 Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
 That, in the course of justice, none of us
 Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy;
 And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
 The deeds of mercy.— Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*.

PRACTICE

Indicate the phrasing and underscore the emphatic words of the selections on pages 250 and 252 and of passages in the English book you are studying. Then read aloud.

INFLECTION

Inflection is a change of pitch during the utterance of the vowel of the accented syllable of a word. There are three inflections: rising /, falling \, and circumflex $\wedge \vee$. Graceful curves in the voice are considered an index of culture and refinement.

1. *The falling inflection looks backward.* It indicates completeness, certainty, conviction, definiteness, directness, and importance.

The mud and filth of the trenches developed latent heroism.

2. *The rising inflection looks forward.* It indicates incompleteness, doubt, indefiniteness, triviality, obviousness, pleading, and negation followed by affirmation.

Please let me go along. (Pleading.)

It's my impression that he was absent yesterday, but I am not sure. (Doubt.)

It is not necessary to be rich to be happy. (Obviousness.)

Coherence is important in debate; in fact a formless debate is a waste of time. (Rising inflection after *debate* to indicate incompleteness.)

What our young men need most is not book-learning, instruction, or culture. It is a development of moral strength, a stiffening of the vertebrae, a cultivation of the habit of "being there." (Rising inflection on *culture* because negation is followed by affirmation.)

3. *The circumflex inflection indicates a double action of the mind.* In sarcasm the speaker's words say just the opposite of what he means. The falling glide of the circumflex may emphasize, or indicate that the thought is complete at the point; the rising glide, that a closely related idea is to follow.

Friends, our task as Americans is to strive for social and industrial justice, achieved through the genuine rule of the people. (Circumflex on *justice* √.)

4. *Questions which begin with a verb and may be answered by yes or no require the rising inflection.*

Don't you hear the bugles play?

5. *Questions which begin with an adverb or pronoun and cannot be answered by yes or no require the falling inflection.*

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people?

6. *Names and titles in direct address are usually given with a slight rising inflection.* A falling inflection suggests formal address; a rising, informal conversation.

Fellow citizens, churches and schools are the foundation of civilization and democracy.

7. *In alternative questions and antithetical expressions the first is given with rising inflection; the second, with falling.*

Will the people insist on efficiency in public office or be contented with half-hearted service?

Time. The time depends upon the largeness of the thought and the quality of the emotion.

1. Quick time is used to express trivial, simple, parenthetical, or unimportant ideas, joy, eagerness, animation, haste, excitement, intense anger, alarm, and indignation.

2. Moderate time is used for most discourse that is not especially emotional.

3. Slow time is used to express involved or important ideas, earnestness, admiration, solemnity, pathos, sympathy, reverence, and sublimity. Slow time may result from slow word utterance or long and frequent pauses.

Pitch. In general high pitch corresponds with quick time; medium pitch, with moderate time; and low pitch, with slow time. Exceptions are parenthetical expressions and ideas that are known to the audience or are of little importance. To subordinate such expressions, use lower pitch, more rapid rate, and less volume.

Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot. — *Dickens*.

A common fault is pitching the voice too high. To pitch the voice properly, begin as if you were just making the statement very clearly to a person not far from you.

Quality. The resonance or tone color varies with the emotion expressed. The affected elocutionist tries to manufacture a voice to fit the emotion to be expressed; the sincere reader has in mind a vivid picture of the scene he is describing or in which he is acting and expresses only what he feels.

Variety. Vary the rate, force, and pitch. A pleasing, straightforward speaker with worth-while ideas will drive people from the hall or lull them to sleep in their seats if he talks for half an hour without climaxes and other variations of the force, rate, and pitch. Real literature has great variety of thought and feeling. In reading, find this variety, and vary the rate, force, pitch, and quality to express it. Read subordinate ideas distinctly but quickly and quietly. Rise to the climaxes.

The eyes. A reader may fail because he forgets the audience — forgets that his purpose is to instruct, con-

vince, or entertain them. Hence it is a good practice to glance at the audience as frequently as possible to deliver the message directly to them and to find out whether they are keenly interested.

HOW TO PREPARE A READING, DECLAMATION, OR RECITATION

(Always learn to read a selection before memorizing. Otherwise the incorrect delivery of the lines will be fixed by repetition.)

1. *First read the selection through silently, picturing the scenes, action, speaker, and hearers.*

2. *Think why the author wrote the selection, what were his point of view and purpose.* A history of literature may tell you what you want to know about the author.

3. *Know the background.* Read the entire speech, story, or book to get the spirit.

4. *Get ready to explain the precise meaning in the sentence of any word or allusion.* Sometimes a history or mythology is necessary.

5. *Is there any word you can't pronounce?* Look it up.

6. *What is the central idea of the selection?* What is the topic of each paragraph?

7. *What ideas or expressions need emphasis because they are new, contrasted, or most necessary to the sense?*

8. *What is the dominant feeling of the selection?* What changes in feeling are there? Why?

9. *Are there climaxes?* Where?

10. *How rapidly will the audience be able to picture the story or grasp the facts?* Don't forget the slow thinker on the rear seat.

11. *What have you done, seen, heard, or read that makes the selection mean more to you?*

12. *If the selection contains dialogue, picture the speakers in action and recall or find out how such people talk.*